

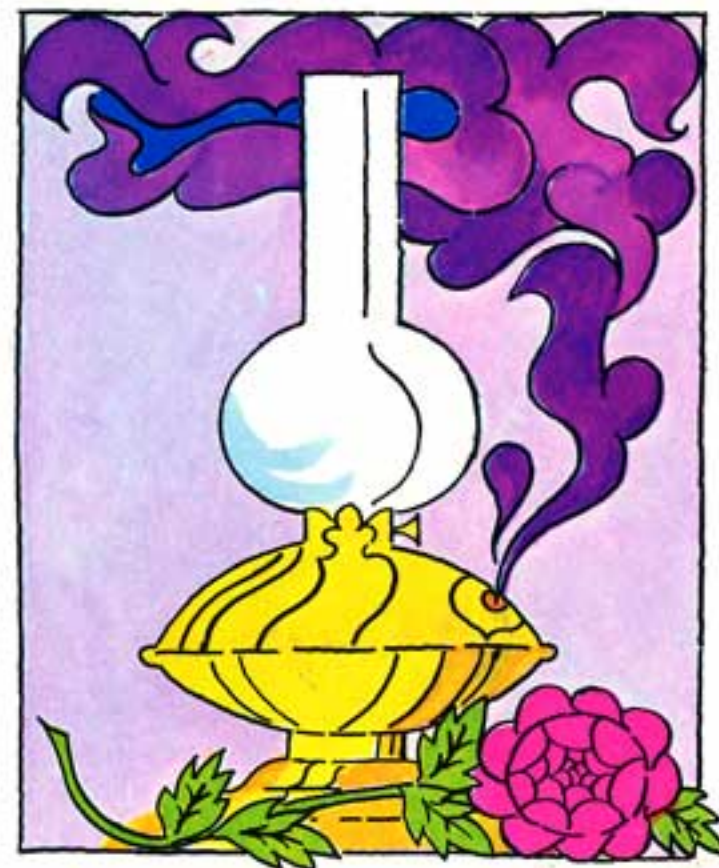
THE WONDERFUL LAMP FROM ISFAHAN

by JO F. FARMAYAN
Pictures by Harriet Sherman



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by Jo F. Farmayan

Pictures by
Harriet Sherman

What to do with the goat? That is the question. Being a Prince of Persia with eight wives, thirty-two children, and many official duties is a big enough challenge for any man.

When you must also deal with the gardener's beloved but totally unreasonable goat—without offending either the gardener or the goat—the challenge can get out of hand, even if you are a very wise, brave, and patient Prince.

What is needed is a bit of magic—if you can find it before the goat eats it. And if the bit of magic you find happens to be The Wonderful Lamp From Isfahan, you will have found a strange but perfect answer to the question: What to do with the goat?

*For Nahid with love
from Jody
May 13, 1974*

To the prince's children, his grandchildren,
and his great grandchildren, with love.

J. F. F.

In memory of Nobuya Abe, his kindness, his wisdom.

H. S.

The Wonderful Lamp From Isfahan
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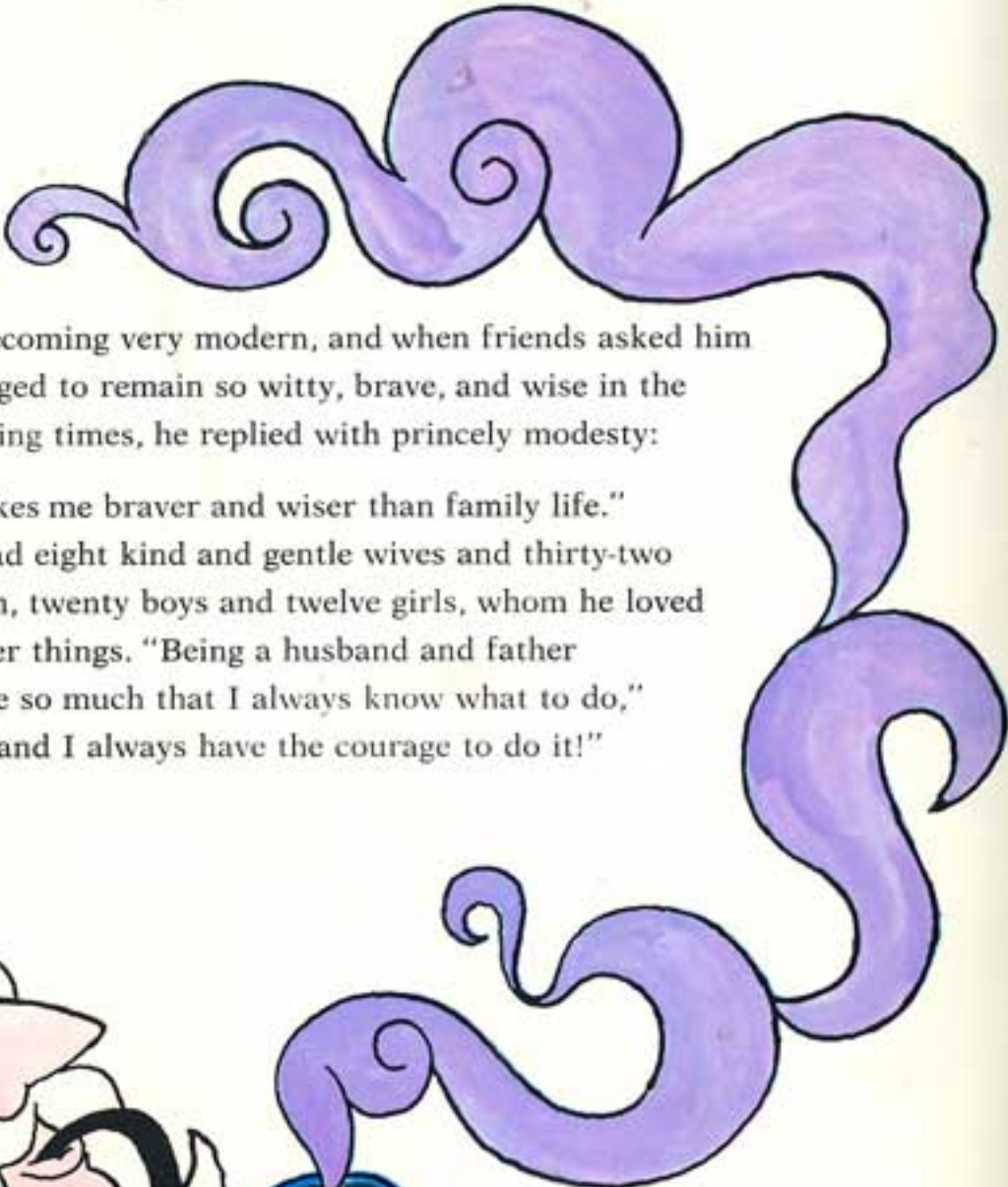


Not many years ago in Persia, a country which is not so far
away as it used to be, there lived a great prince.
Sixty winters had frosted his hair, but sixty summers
had renewed the warm sparkle of his hazel eyes. This prince
loved laughter and ease but he could also be fierce.



He dined and conversed with the poets of the East.

And he rode to hunt and to war beside the lords of the West

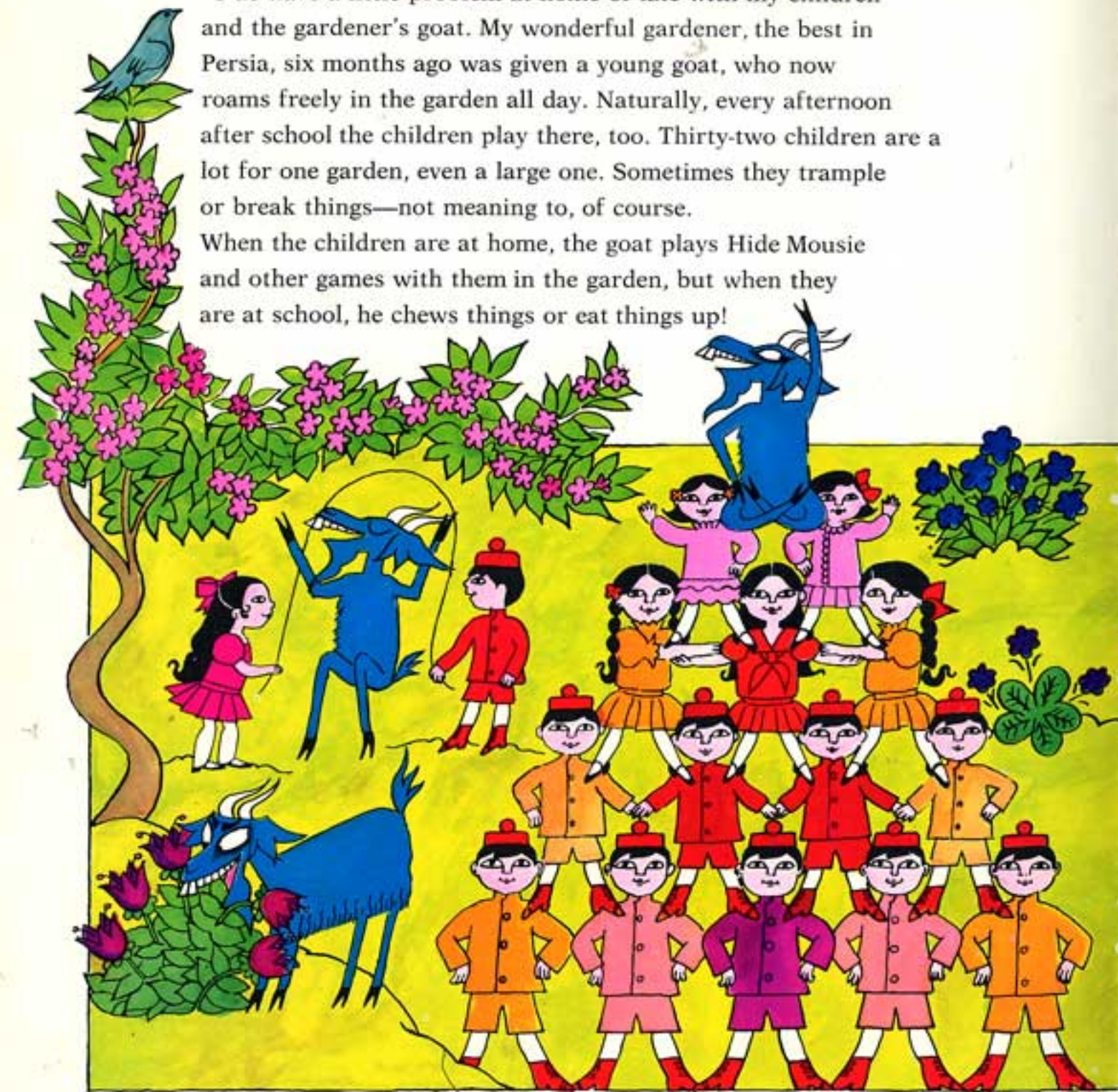


Persia was becoming very modern, and when friends asked him how he managed to remain so witty, brave, and wise in the face of changing times, he replied with princely modesty:

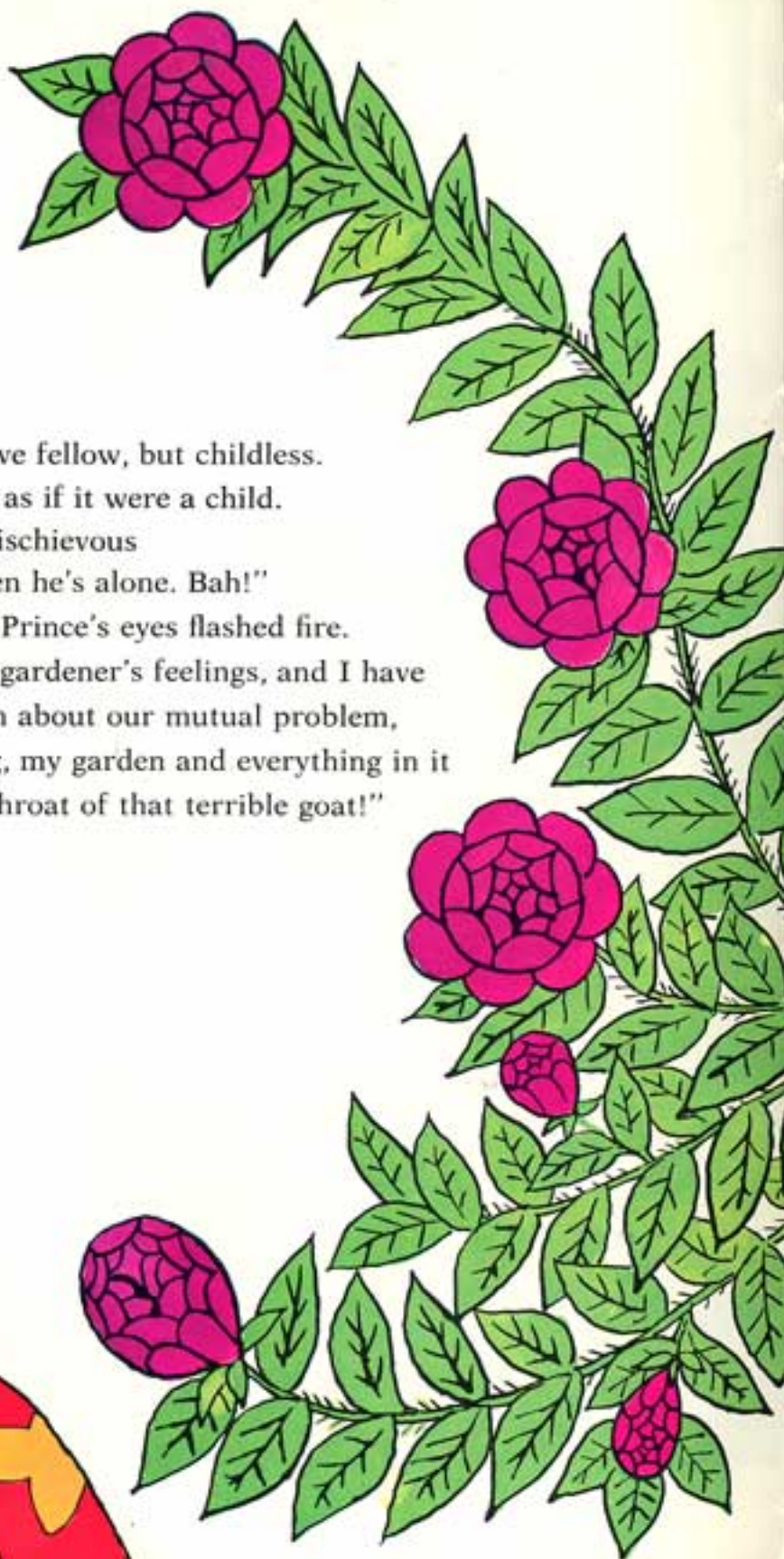
"Nothing makes me braver and wiser than family life." The Prince had eight kind and gentle wives and thirty-two lively children, twenty boys and twelve girls, whom he loved above all other things. "Being a husband and father has taught me so much that I always know what to do," he boomed, "and I always have the courage to do it!"

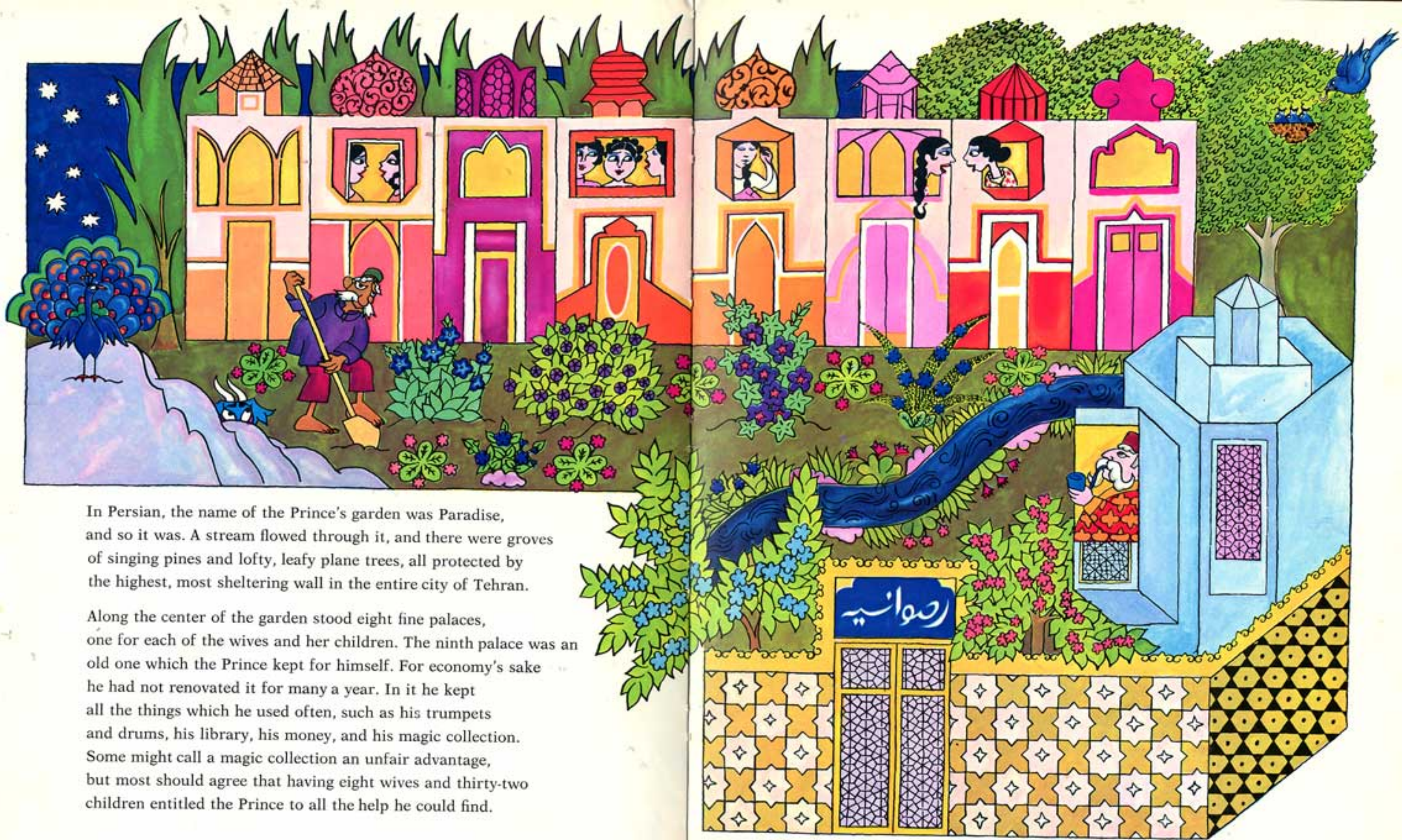


But one day, when his friends had gathered with him to celebrate the birthday of his eldest son, the Prince confessed, "I do have a little problem at home of late with my children and the gardener's goat. My wonderful gardener, the best in Persia, six months ago was given a young goat, who now roams freely in the garden all day. Naturally, every afternoon after school the children play there, too. Thirty-two children are a lot for one garden, even a large one. Sometimes they trample or break things—not meaning to, of course. When the children are at home, the goat plays Hide Mousie and other games with them in the garden, but when they are at school, he chews things or eat things up!



"The gardener is a sensitive fellow, but childless. Indeed, he loves the goat as if it were a child. He says the creature is mischievous because he's unhappy when he's alone. Bah!" Behind his spectacles the Prince's eyes flashed fire. "I don't want to hurt the gardener's feelings, and I have written notes to him often about our mutual problem, but unless I *do* something, my garden and everything in it will disappear down the throat of that terrible goat!"



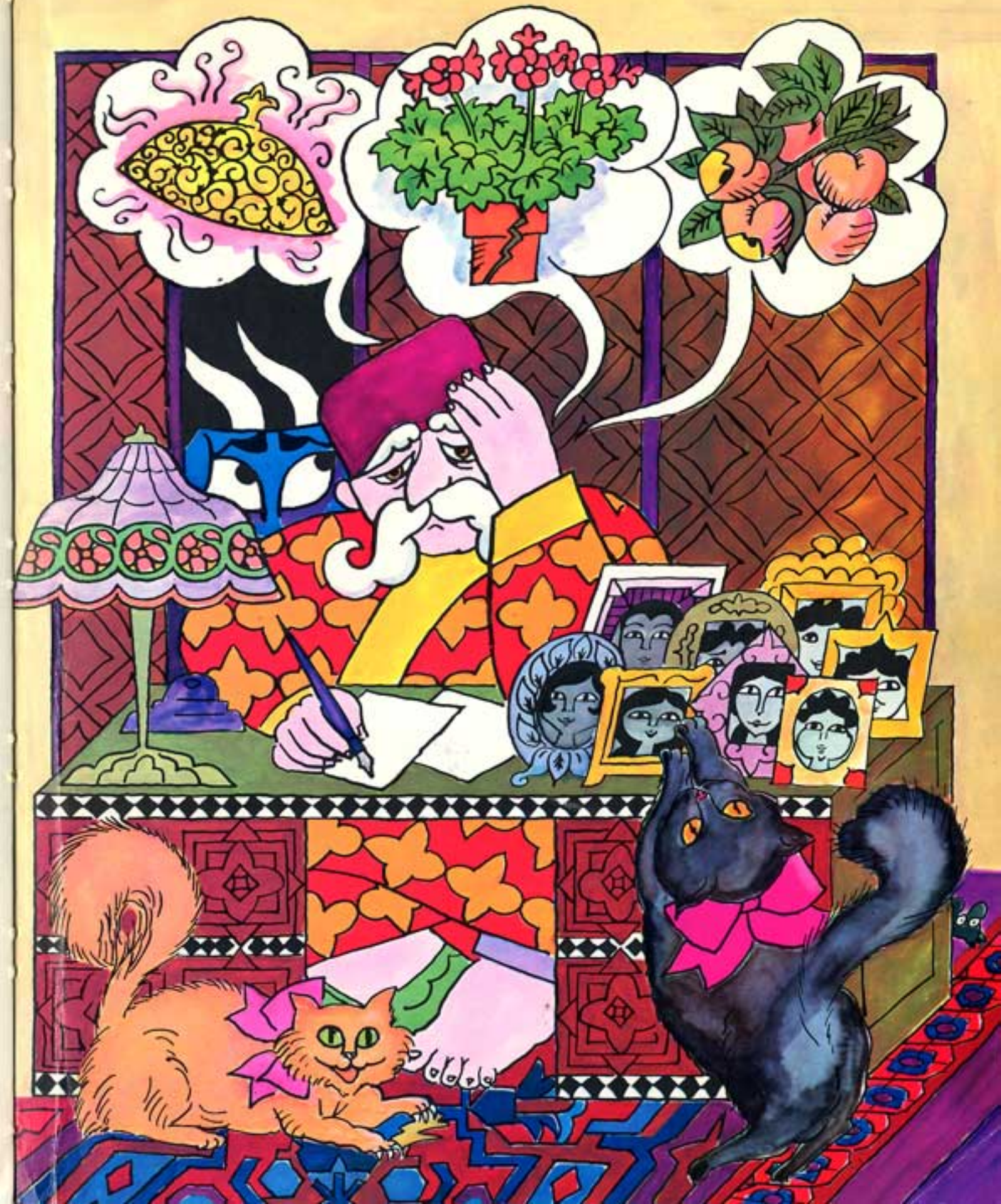
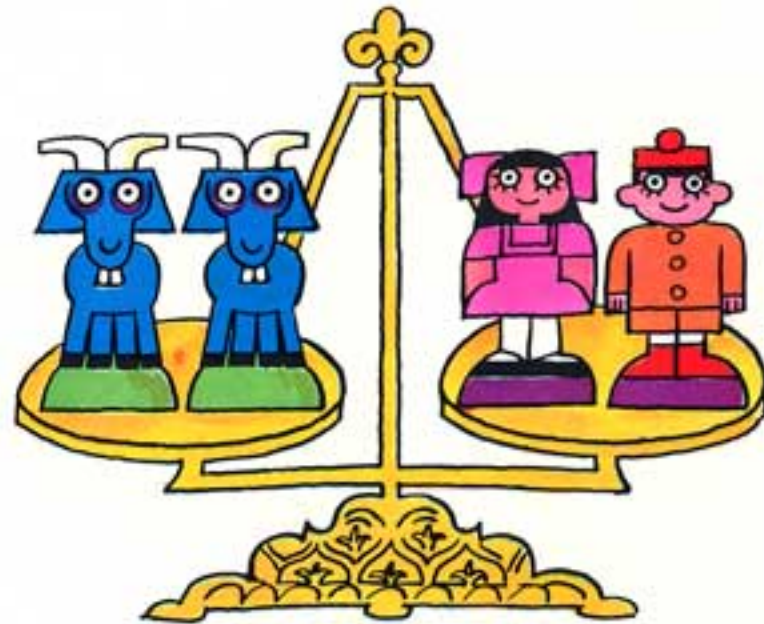


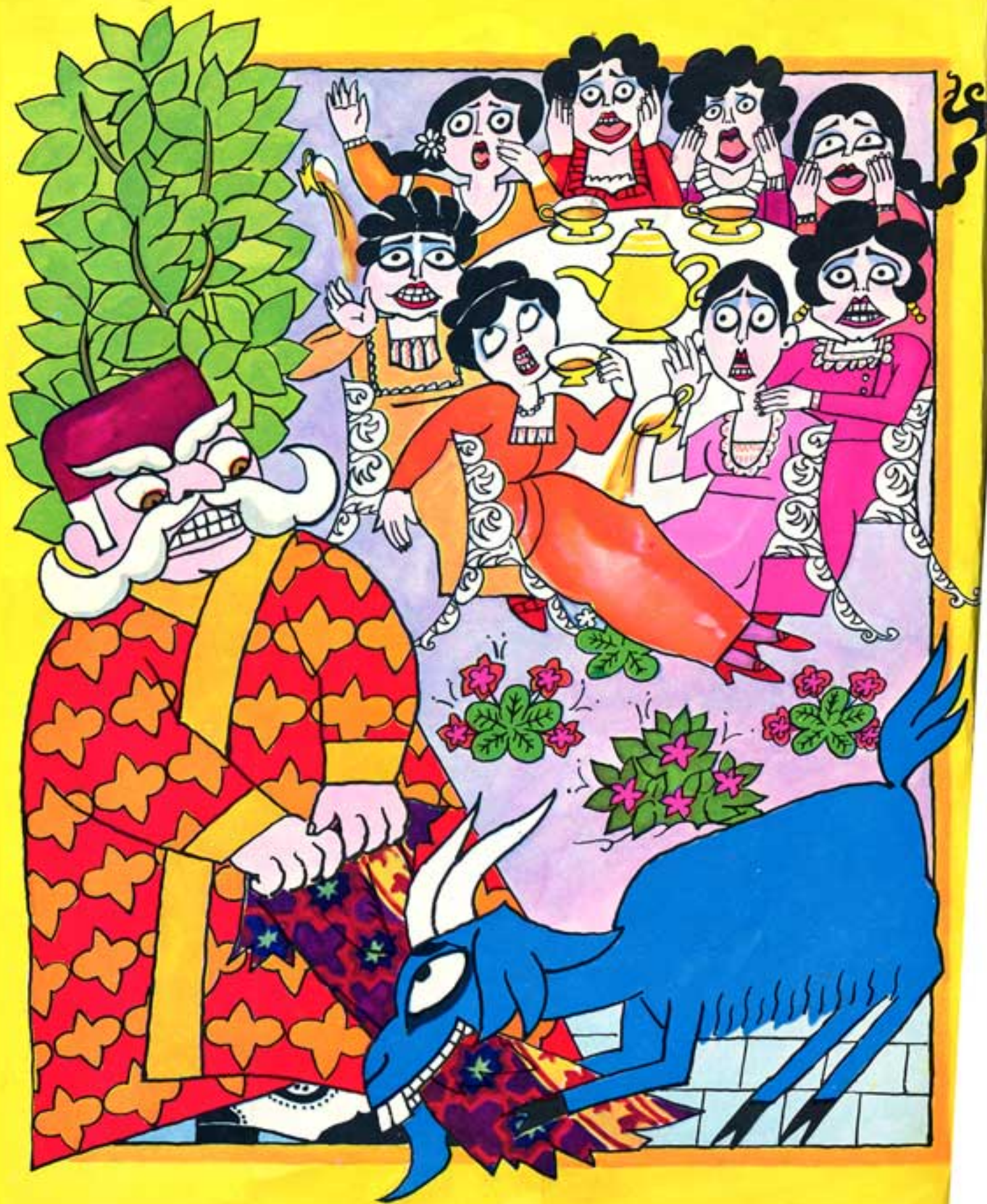
In Persian, the name of the Prince's garden was Paradise, and so it was. A stream flowed through it, and there were groves of singing pines and lofty, leafy plane trees, all protected by the highest, most sheltering wall in the entire city of Tehran.

Along the center of the garden stood eight fine palaces, one for each of the wives and her children. The ninth palace was an old one which the Prince kept for himself. For economy's sake he had not renovated it for many a year. In it he kept all the things which he used often, such as his trumpets and drums, his library, his money, and his magic collection. Some might call a magic collection an unfair advantage, but most should agree that having eight wives and thirty-two children entitled the Prince to all the help he could find.

The Prince also had his office in his palace. There he ordered supplies for his wives, wrote notes to the gardener, and read the notes the gardener sent him. Since the arrival of the goat, the Prince and the gardener had written to each other very often. "Keeping track," the Prince called it.

For example, he would write to the gardener,
"Goat: One silk slipper. He may have its mate if he'll call for it."
Or,
"Goat: Lid of the gatekeeper's samovar. Was still hot."
And, for example, the gardener would write to the Prince,
"Children: Geranium pots. Who can guess how many?"
Or,
"Children: Apricot trees. No jam this year."





The wives were usually too busy giving orders or counting quilts or making candies to be much interested, but the Prince became more and more distressed. One afternoon while his wives were having tea together, the Prince dozed in the sun in a little private courtyard beside his palace where he had just spread his magic carpet, magic silver mace, and invisible cloak out to air. All at once, a small noise close by made the Prince open his eyes wide. His startled gaze met the mischievous glance of the goat, who was standing over the magic collection, busily chewing it up.

The Prince had time only to rescue a damp shred of magic carpet from the goat's jaws before the nimble beast skipped out the archway. Several days later, the Prince was still trying to calm himself. As he strolled in the garden, he tried to collect his thoughts.

"A goat has got me," he groaned. "In these modern times fairness and equality have become so fashionable that a prince can no longer manage things by stamping his foot or waving his sword. I have thirty-two beautiful children, but the gardener and his wife have none. Every day my thirty-two children run loose in the garden, so fairness requires that the goat may do the same. Any sensible man would use magic in this case," the Prince grumbled as he paced angrily back and forth, "but mine has been gobbled by a goat!"

"All gone in two munches and one crunch!" the Prince raged bitterly. "And it seems that I shall never replace my treasures because Ramin the Magnificent Magician of Yezd has vanished! I have written to him many times, but to no avail. How the last sorcerer in Persia had the nerve to do such a thing I'll never . . ."

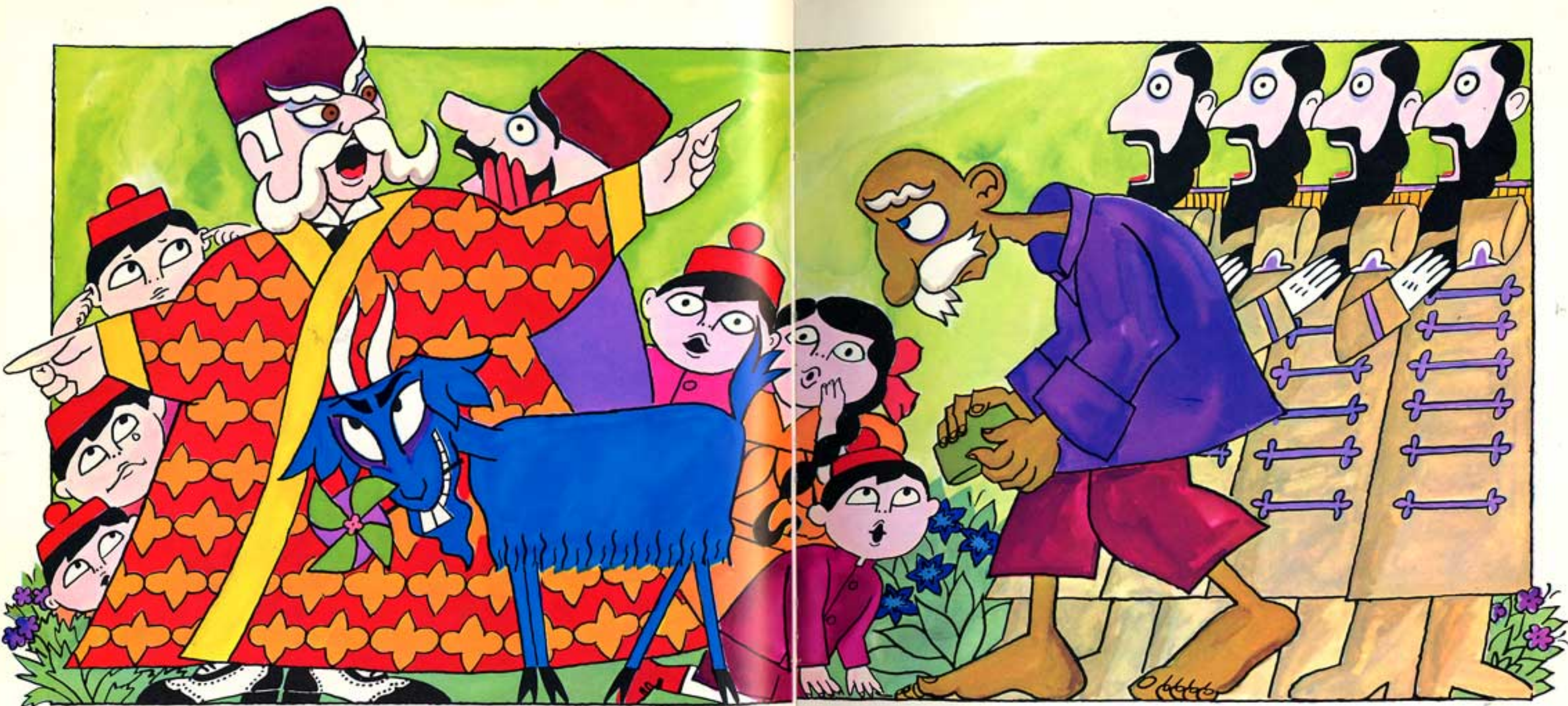
Just then, raucous horn blasts from the street made the Prince look up. He saw the gatekeeper run out from his little house, pull open the big gate, and jump aside as four automobiles, old but black and shiny, clattered into the garden. Each was steered by a bearded driver, and each was filled to bursting with giggling children, wriggling notebooks, and jiggling lunch pails.

While the children leaped out like popcorn from four hot poppers, the gardener's goat shot out through the open gateway. The prince stared at him in helpless dread.





WHAM! The goat butted a toy seller who was passing in the street. The toy seller and his toys that were fastened to a cage on his head toppled to the ground and rolled this way and that, a wild whirl of colors in a billow of rising dust.



"Grab the goat!" yelled the Prince to the gatekeeper.
"Help the toy seller! Shut the gate!" To the drivers he shouted,
"The children! Don't let them scatter! AND FETCH THE GARDENER!"
All obeyed hastily, and the gatekeeper pulled the goat by a
horn to where the angry Prince and his frightened children clustered.
The gatekeeper whispered something to the Prince, who listened

in horror then turned purple. The gardener, trailed by
the drivers, arrived at this moment, just in time to see
the goat give the Prince a friendly and saucy butt.

"Bah!" exploded the Prince and pointed at the goat.
"Look at the wretch! He hasn't even the grace to look sheepish!
Sir," he said formally to the gardener, "tie up your goat!"

While the bewildered gardener leashed the goat with a piece of rope, the Prince spoke to his children with the wrath of a father who was doing what he now knew he should have done long before:

"My Long-Suffering Highness has just seen the gardener's goat knock down a toy seller and eat, yes *eat*, his pinwheels and whistles and thingamabobs! I say the goat has gone too far! Eating everything in the garden is bad enough, but butting a toy seller, *who isn't ours*, is beyond the limit! Why haven't you told me? Why, why, why?"


The children looked at each other, stunned.

"But Papa Your Highness," answered the eldest boy, "we didn't know! We never see what happens behind us between here and school because we're packed in so close we can't turn our heads!"

The Prince accepted this but remained firm. "I'm sorry that you must lose a playfellow, but the goat must be tied in the *farthest* corner of the garden!" Then he turned to the gardener and bellowed, "AND I SHAN'T TIE UP MY CHILDREN, SIR! NOW WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT? HEY? FAIRNESS AND MODERN TIMES BE HANGED! WE PRINCES CAN BE PROVOKED!"

The gardener looked miserable and very frightened. The Prince dismissed the drivers and was about to march grandly back to his palace when he heard a snuffle. He sighed and his manner changed. He looked carefully at his children and patted two or three of the nearest heads. At that, many sobs arose among the children and many tears fell.





"Why, bless me," said the Prince, "does that terrible goat's freedom mean so much to you?"

"Oh, yes, Papa Your Highness," breathed a small passionate voice. "He's always in Hide Mousie, and he knows all the places in the garden where wild mint grows! He *can't* be tied forever and ever and ever!"

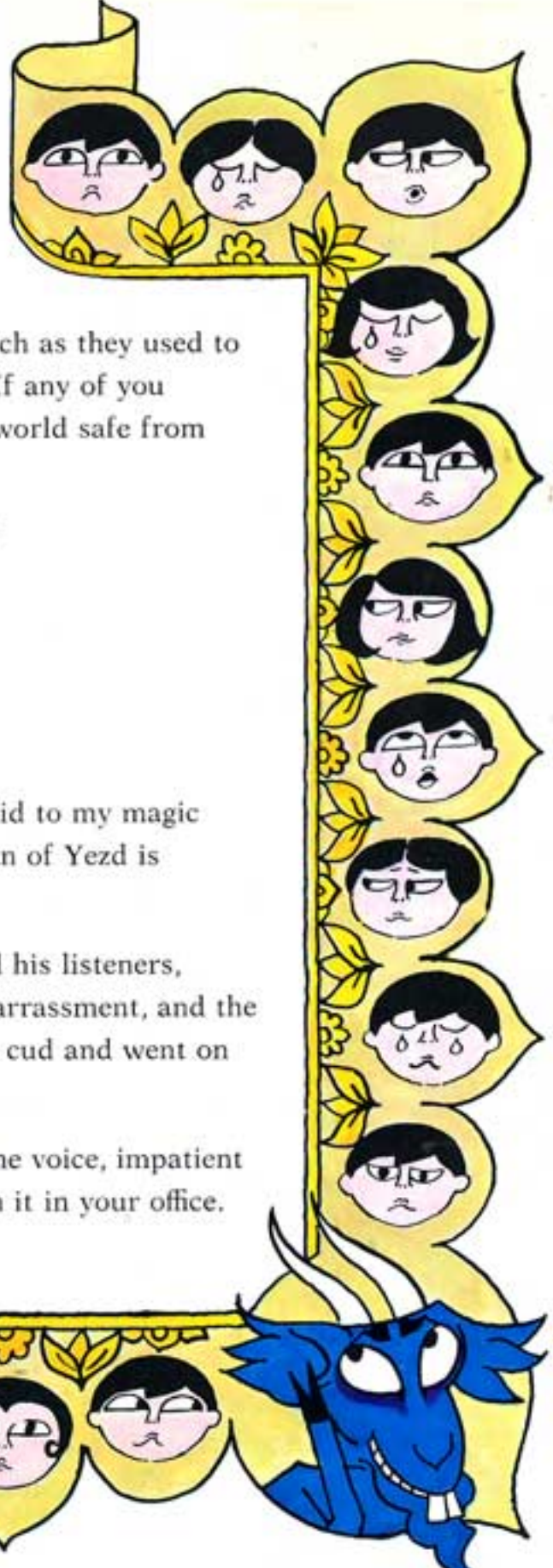
"He's Guardian of Tarzan's Secret Treasure," protested another young voice which ended in a gulp.

"And he's Lookout for us when we . . ." another voice began then drifted into silence.

"This is even more complicated than I thought," said the Prince. "What are we to do? We can't tie up the goat, and we can't let him attack toy sellers, and the gatekeeper can't close the gate faster, and—oh dear—the gardener is weeping, too!"

"Please, Papa Your Highness," spoke a hopeful voice, "can't you buy four new *quiet* automobiles? Then perhaps the goat won't hear when the gate is about to be opened. And then . . ."

"I'm sorry, my dear," the Prince interrupted gently, "but with so many children and wives to clothe and feed, I can't buy four



new automobiles at once. Princes are not so rich as they used to be. My poor Old Highness is at his wits' end. If any of you can think of a really good way of making the world safe from this goat, I promise that we shall untie him!"

"I know something, Papa Your Highness . . ."

The Prince's eyes brightened.

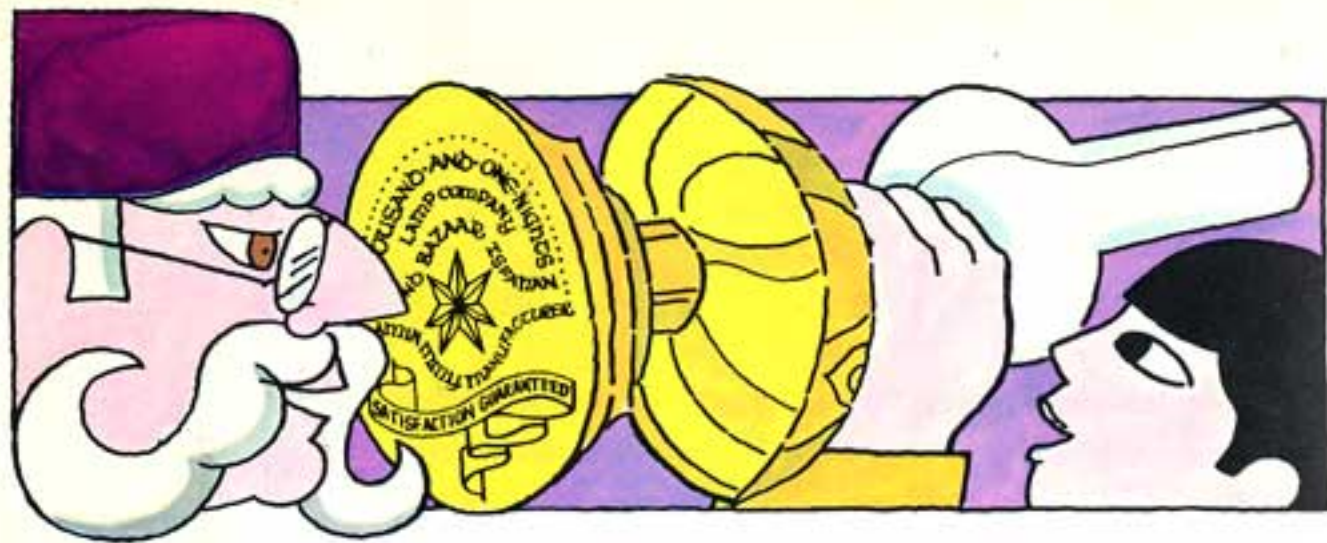
". . . magic!"

The Prince's shoulders drooped.

"Bah! Magic! All of you know what the goat did to my magic collection, and Ramin the Magnificent Magician of Yezd is simply nowhere to be found!"

There were groans of disappointment from all his listeners, except the gardener, who was mute with embarrassment, and the goat, who, with a wary expression, shifted his cud and went on chewing.

"But Papa Your Highness," continued the same voice, impatient now, "you *do* have something magic! I've seen it in your office. I'll bring it!"



Before the Prince could speak, his eldest son had bounded away in the direction of his father's palace. Everyone ran after the boy except the gardener, who followed listlessly as his goat urged him along by excitedly pulling on the rope. At the palace stairs they met the boy coming back.

"Look, Papa Your Highness!" He held up an object in his hands. The Prince stared at it in dismay.

"But son," he said, "that's only an ordinary kerosine lamp of the kind they make nowadays in Isfahan. We have them about everywhere for nights when the electricity fails."

"No, Papa Your Highness," gasped the boy, breathing hard. "This one is different! Read the stamp on the base! It says, 'Thousand-and-One-Nights Lamp Company, Grand Bazaar, Isfahan; Ramin M. M. Y., Manufacturer; Satisfaction Guaranteed.' It's a magic lamp!"

"Praise Allah for your sharp young eyes!" exclaimed the Prince, and he took the lamp carefully. With one hand clasping its neck and the other steadying its glass chimney, he lifted it high to examine. "You're right, of course! There's his mark, a seven-pointed star! Hah! Now I know where to find that harum-scarum! This lamp arrived, bless me, weeks and weeks ago, but until now I'd no notion who sent it.

"Move back, all of you, and sit down so you won't get hurt," the Prince directed, and with trembling hands he placed the lamp gently on the lowest palace step. Then he removed the tiny lid which was fitted over a small round hole in the side of the lamp and stepped back with a thoughtful frown.

The boys and girls commenced a great whooping and calling:

"Come out, genie!"

"We need you!"

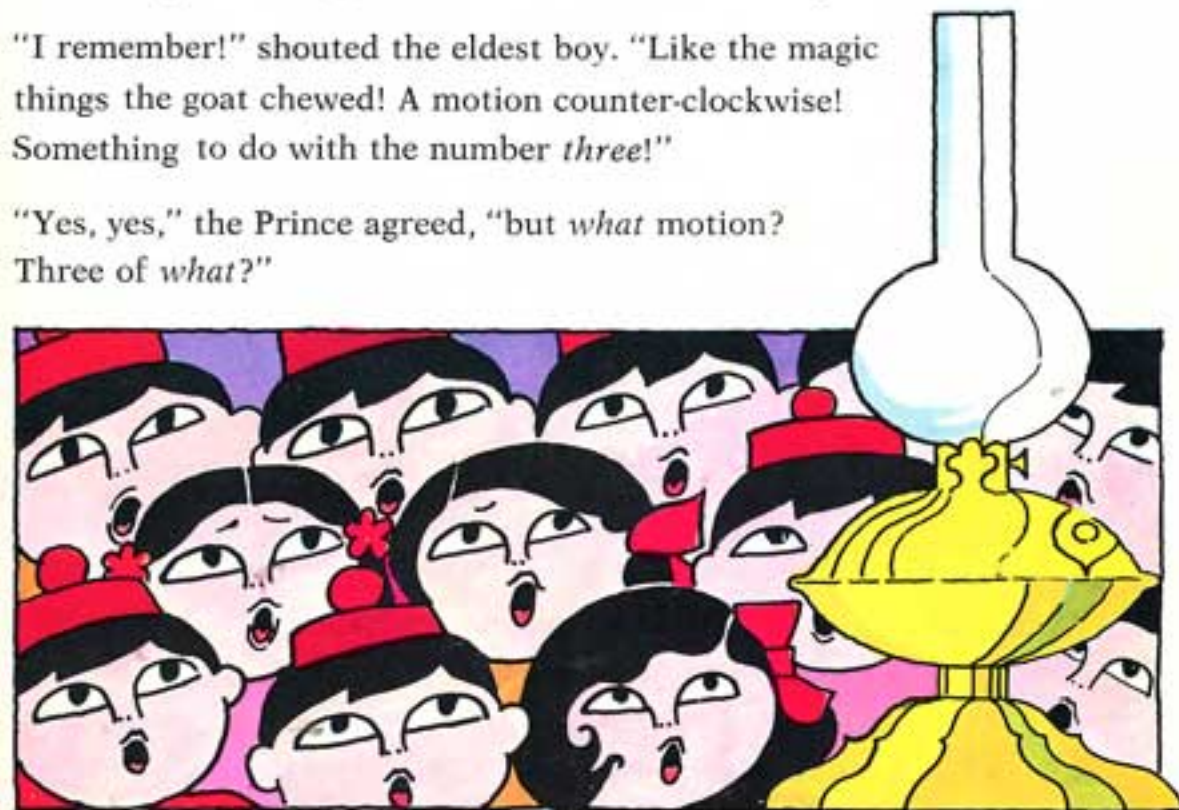
"We know you're in there!"

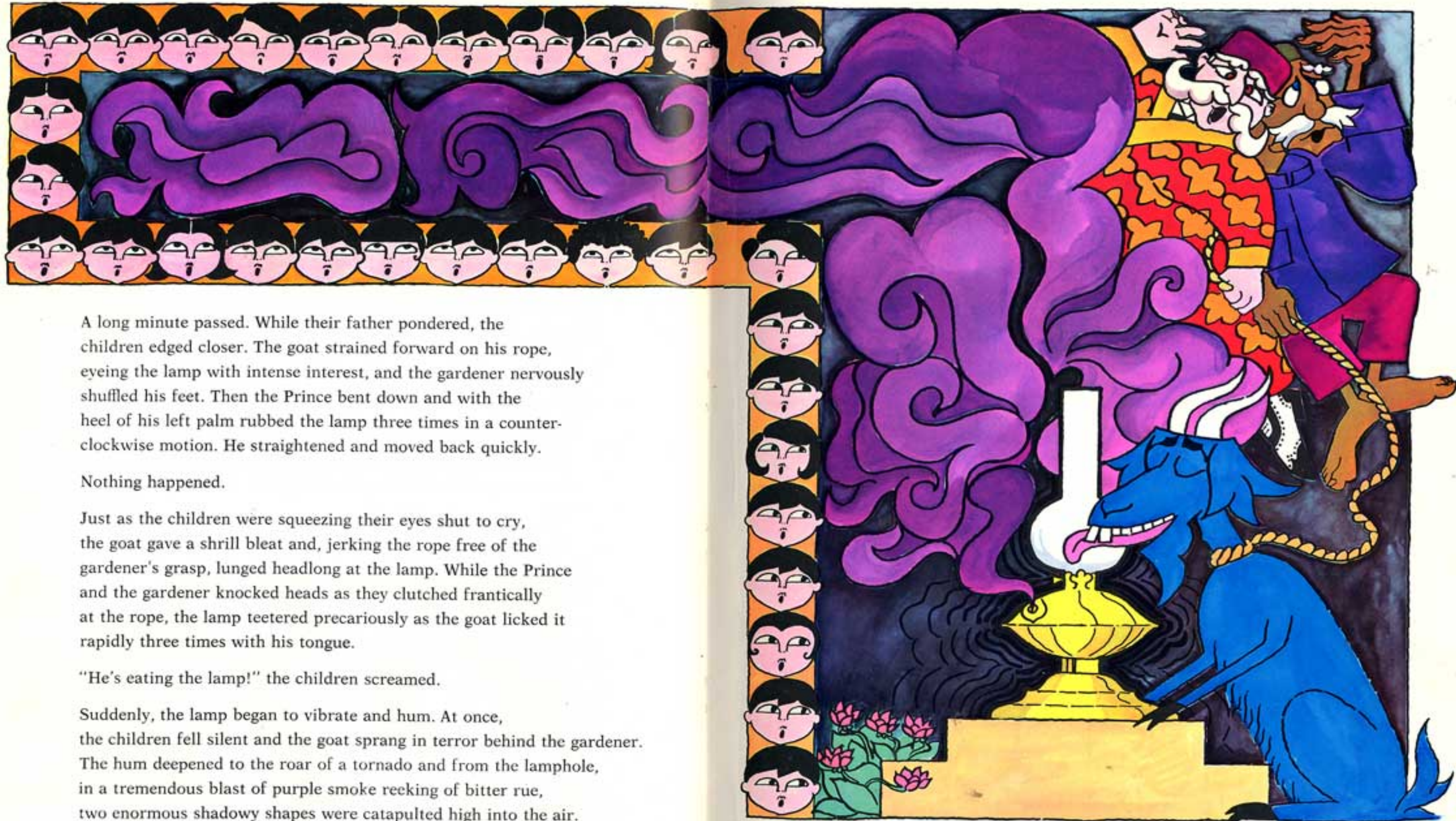
Nothing happened.

"That won't do," the Prince explained. "All of Ramin's devices are under a spell which must be broken before the magic is released."

"I remember!" shouted the eldest boy. "Like the magic things the goat chewed! A motion counter-clockwise! Something to do with the number *three*!"

"Yes, yes," the Prince agreed, "but *what* motion? Three of *what*?"





A long minute passed. While their father pondered, the children edged closer. The goat strained forward on his rope, eyeing the lamp with intense interest, and the gardener nervously shuffled his feet. Then the Prince bent down and with the heel of his left palm rubbed the lamp three times in a counter-clockwise motion. He straightened and moved back quickly.

Nothing happened.

Just as the children were squeezing their eyes shut to cry, the goat gave a shrill bleat and, jerking the rope free of the gardener's grasp, lunged headlong at the lamp. While the Prince and the gardener knocked heads as they clutched frantically at the rope, the lamp teetered precariously as the goat licked it rapidly three times with his tongue.

"He's eating the lamp!" the children screamed.

Suddenly, the lamp began to vibrate and hum. At once, the children fell silent and the goat sprang in terror behind the gardener. The hum deepened to the roar of a tornado and from the lamphole, in a tremendous blast of purple smoke reeking of bitter rue, two enormous shadowy shapes were catapulted high into the air.

Whirling and tumbling together in a hazy mass queerly knobbed with elbows, knees, and pointed slippers, they lightly descended, suddenly broke apart in two distinct figures, and landed with a soft *thump* on the palace steps beside the lamp. In that instant they dwindled in size, became quite solid, and appeared as two ordinary men in extraordinary array.

One was short and fat, with pointed green slippers, broad white trousers, a green cummerbund around his broad middle, and a broad, thick beard, dyed red with henna, spreading gloriously across his chest. A little higher he wore a friendly smile, and above that a turban of gorgeously striped taffeta. From its crown a golden tassel dangled over his forehead. He winked at the children, folded his arms under his beard, and said nothing.

The other was tall and thin and, looking at him downward from the peak of his tall fur cap, the children saw a distracted frown, below that a long, narrow hennaed beard, then a flowing robe of darkest blue, embroidered in a pattern of paisley and peacock feathers. It was drawn in at his waist by a looped and tangled chain of gold from which hung a hundred crystal keys, tinkling and chinking against each other. Beneath the flickering hem of his robe the toes of his pointed slippers winked like stars. He was hopping about, rubbing his knees, flexing his elbows, stretching his shoulders, and groaning with painful pleasure.



"Two genies," whispered the children in awe.

"Two?" echoed the Prince as he adjusted the spectacles which had fallen low on his nose. "One is a genie to be sure, but the other? No! It *can't* be . . ." He hastily polished his lenses. "Praise Allah! It is! It's Ramin! *The Magnificent Magician of Yezd!*"

"My dear Prince!" exclaimed the sorcerer, and in the kindly Persian fashion, they rushed to embrace each other.

"But what were you doing in my lamp, my dear fellow, and why has no one forwarded your mail?" the Prince asked reasonably as he helped Ramin straighten his cap.

The aged magician looked speechlessly at the Prince for a moment and then burst into wild laughter, half tears.

"For sixty long days I've been wadded in that lamp with Jamshid Khan, my finest and fattest genie! When I summoned up the magic whirlwind to push him into the lamp, I found him so *terribly* fat I had to help push, too; then my dratted keychain got caught on his cummerbund and I was sucked into the lamp with him!

"Imagine! *Two* of us jammed into a space where, magic or no magic, there was room only for one! The lid was still off but the spell was already at work, so neither of us could move, or utter charm or curse. My apprentice returned from lunch and, as I had earlier instructed him, screwed down the lid, wrapped the lamp and posted it to you—spirit, wick, and wizard! And no help for us until a goat licked the lamp three times counter-clockwise!" The sorcerer rolled his eyes expressively at this recollection.





The Prince laughed in spite of himself. "That's the silliest spell breaker I ever heard of," he said. "You're lucky the two of you are not scrootted in there still!"

"The two of us!" Thus reminded of the present, Ramin started and looked about. "You've no time to lose! When a genie of mine comes out of his lamp, he's yours for only seven hundred seconds, and then he must return to Isfahan.

"Jamshid, old friend, help them! I shall await you here, dear Prince! Gardener, good fellow, I'll keep your splendid goat while you run round to the pantry and tell them to fetch tea!"

The old magician limped to a garden chair. The children, in an excess of wonder and awe, tore their gaze from him and turned it with solemn trust on their father and the waiting genie.

Jamshid Khan bowed and smiled with an air of genial competence. "It is Your Highness's right to make a wish, but if instead you would describe your problems and leave their solution to me,

satisfaction would be guaranteed. Absolutely! There is almost nothing I can't do!"

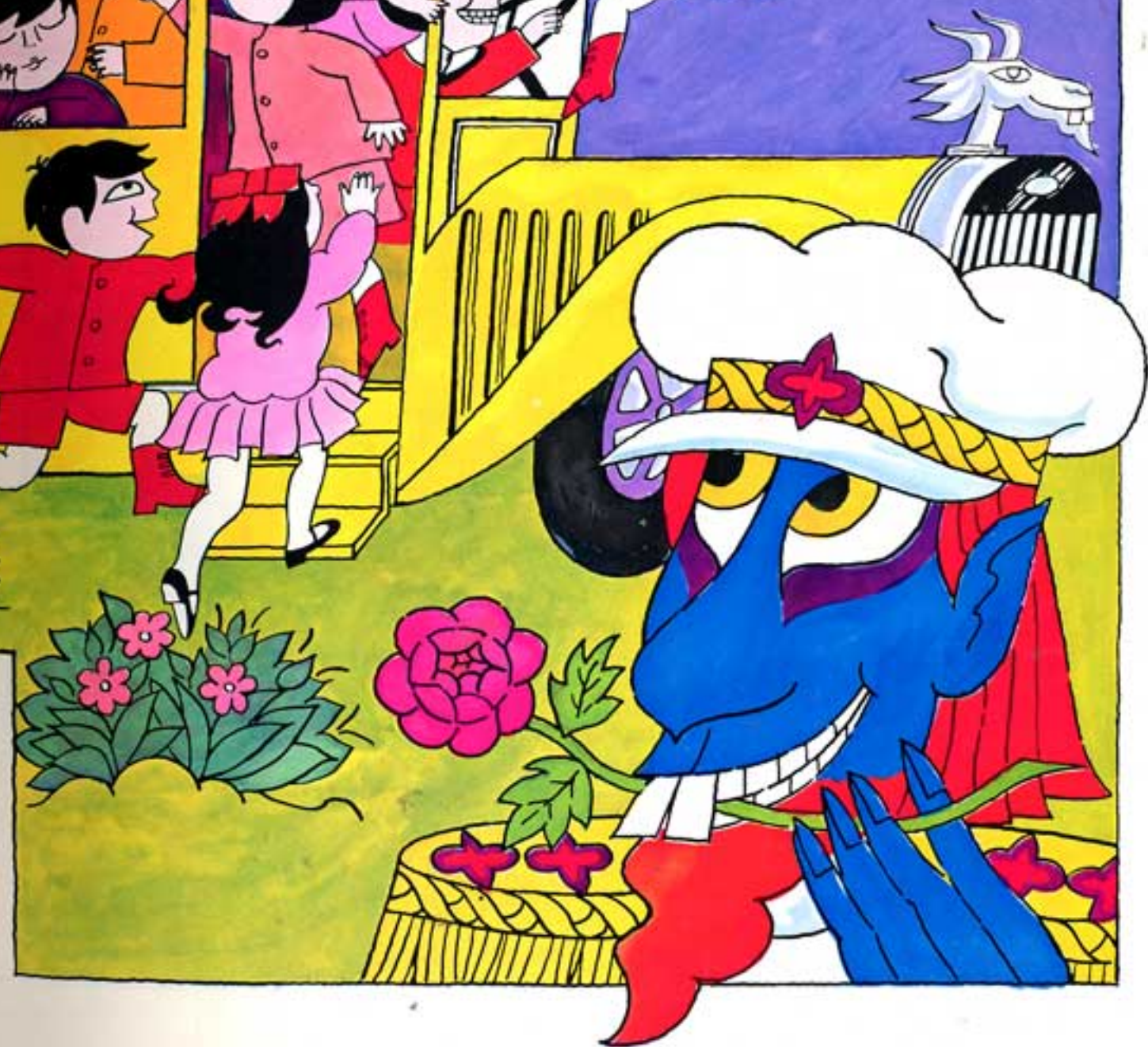
"We are in good hands!" exclaimed the Prince. Then quickly he told the genie about the children going to school and the goat having to stay home, about the noisy automobiles, the gate, and the toy seller, and about how miserable everyone felt now that the goat must be tied. He started to say more, but the genie with a polite gesture interrupted him.

"I know exactly what to do," he said as he glanced at a massive gold watch which he had drawn out of his cummerbund, "and I have three hundred seconds left to do it in. Baskets and barrels of time for Jamshid Khan! Let sixty seconds pass, then meet me in the garage!" He disappeared in a business-like puff of purple smoke lightly scented with rue, but only the sorcerer and the goat and the returning gardener saw and smelled it. The Prince and all his children were already running toward the garage as fast as they could.



Past four palaces they raced, down some steps, up the drive, and into the garage. And there it was, beautiful, new, and resplendently yellow.

"A SCHOOL BUS!" shouted the children, and delightedly they swarmed into it. And then, with screams of joy, they crowded around its strange driver, a very young man with remarkable golden eyes and a thin, straggly beard. He was chewing something.





The genie appeared before the Prince, smiling complacently. "Has there ever been a more perfect solution to a problem?" he asked with pride.

"The school bus is first-rate and I can never thank you enough," beamed the Prince. "But," he lowered his voice to a whisper, "*is the driver really dependable? He looks horribly familiar!*"

"Have no fear, Your Highness," Jamshid Khan assured him. "He's licensed and expert. He has perfect eyesight, marvelous reflexes, a flawless character, and he *loves* children!"

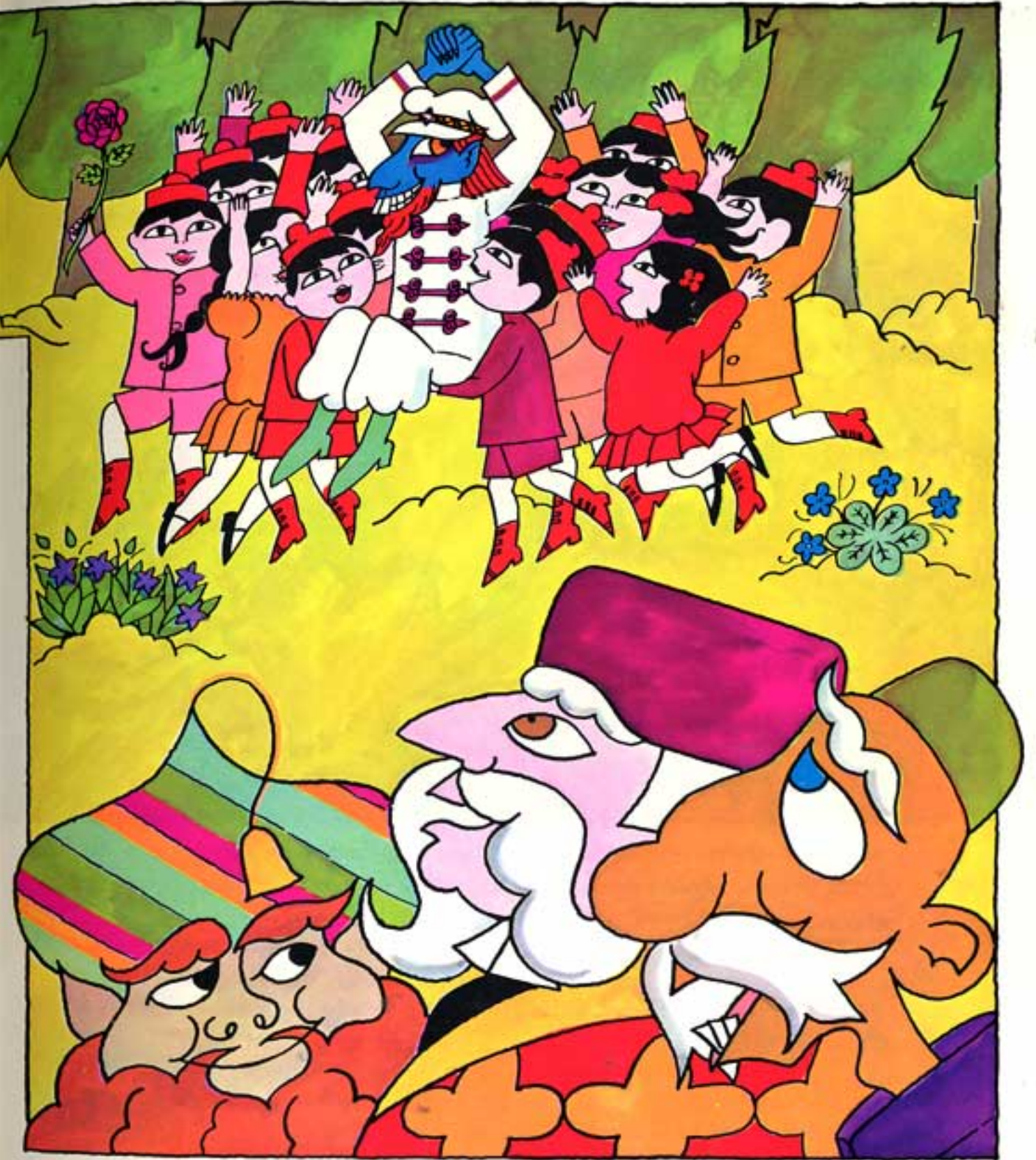
At this moment the gardener entered, a length of rope dangling from his hand. Dazed, he took notice only of the Prince.

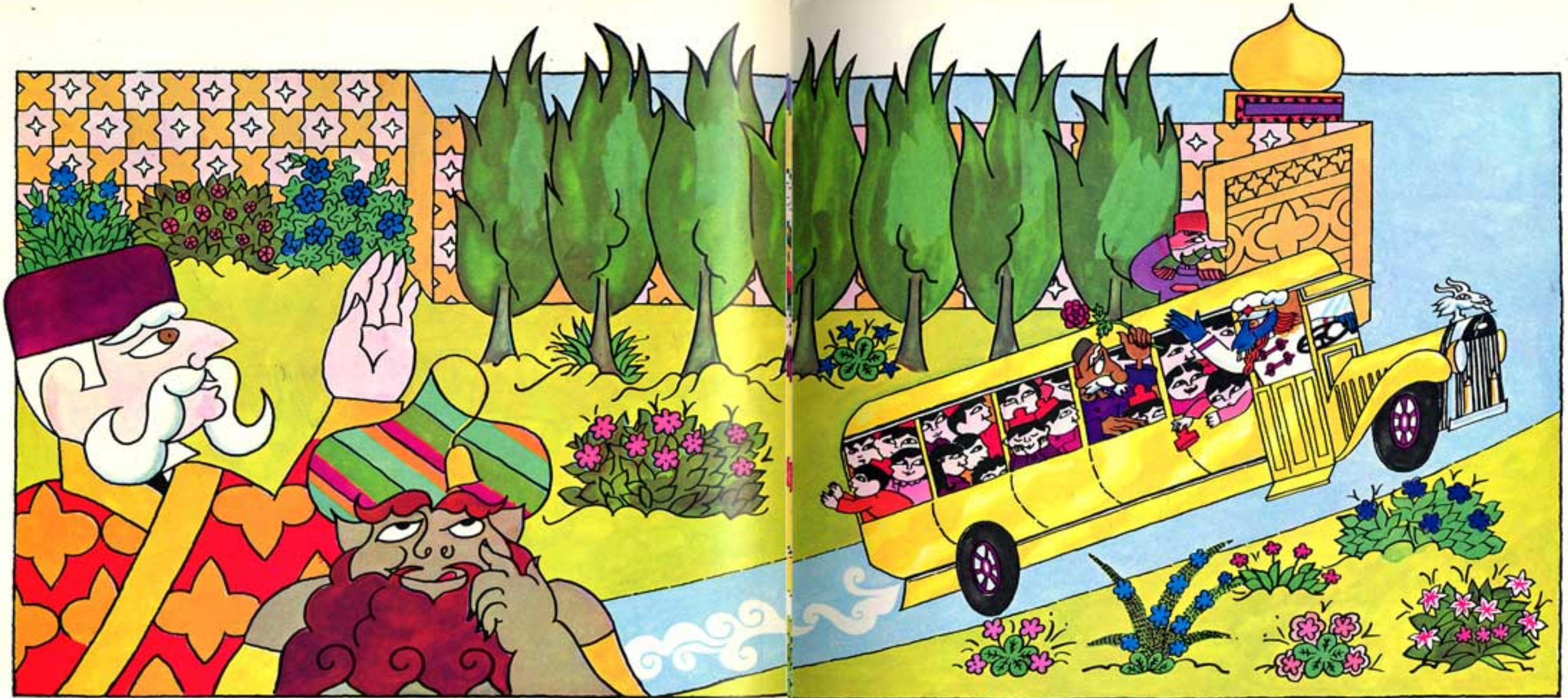
"My little goat, my furry darling, has disappeared, Your Highness," he mourned. "*Poof!* Like that! While I was patting his head!"

"Never mind, my good fellow," said the Prince gently.

"Join the children and meet our new driver. You and he shall become great friends!"

The gardener peered doubtfully at the smiling youth whom the children were begging excitedly for a ride. Gradually the gardener brightened. "I believe we shall, Your Highness," he said. "There's *something* I like about his looks!"





"Beyond a doubt," the Prince agreed happily. "Give them all a ride, and the gardener, too!" he shouted jovially to the driver, who saluted and helped the gardener into the bus as the ecstatic children clambered aboard.

"Supper in one hour!" called the Prince, and he and the genie stepped aside as the glowing yellow school bus purred past them with its joyful load.

"I shall sup tonight in Isfahan," the genie said gleefully,

"on one glorious sixty-day sized meal!"

"And I," replied the Prince, "must talk to Ramin about a new assortment of magic makers. Or I may not. I'm feeling pretty brave, witty, and wise again!"

"Then farewell, good Prince. May you never need more genies!" Jamshid Khan laughed, gave his broad middle a hungry pat, and vanished in a puff of purple smoke with its magical odor of rue.

* * *

That night after settling Ramin in comfortable quarters and ordering supper on a tray for the famished magician, the Prince, with each wife in turn beside him, stopped at every child's bed, answered questions, and said good night. In each palace the questions were very nearly the same:

"Papa Your Highness, when I grow up may I dye my beard red?"

"Yes, son, after it's turned white so the henna can show."

"Mother of My Soul, can't I grow *without* hot milk for breakfast?"

"No, dear."

"Papa Your Highness, may I be a magician when I grow up?"

"Old-style sorcerers are passing, my boy. Magic has been divided into many special fields. There's engineering, medicine, ah . . . public administration, and um . . . social welfare, and so on. Learn any one of them well and you can work wonders in Persia!"

"Mother of My Soul, would you call a red cap ruined if it were run over by something a *little* heavy, like a school bus?"

"I'll look at it tomorrow, dear."

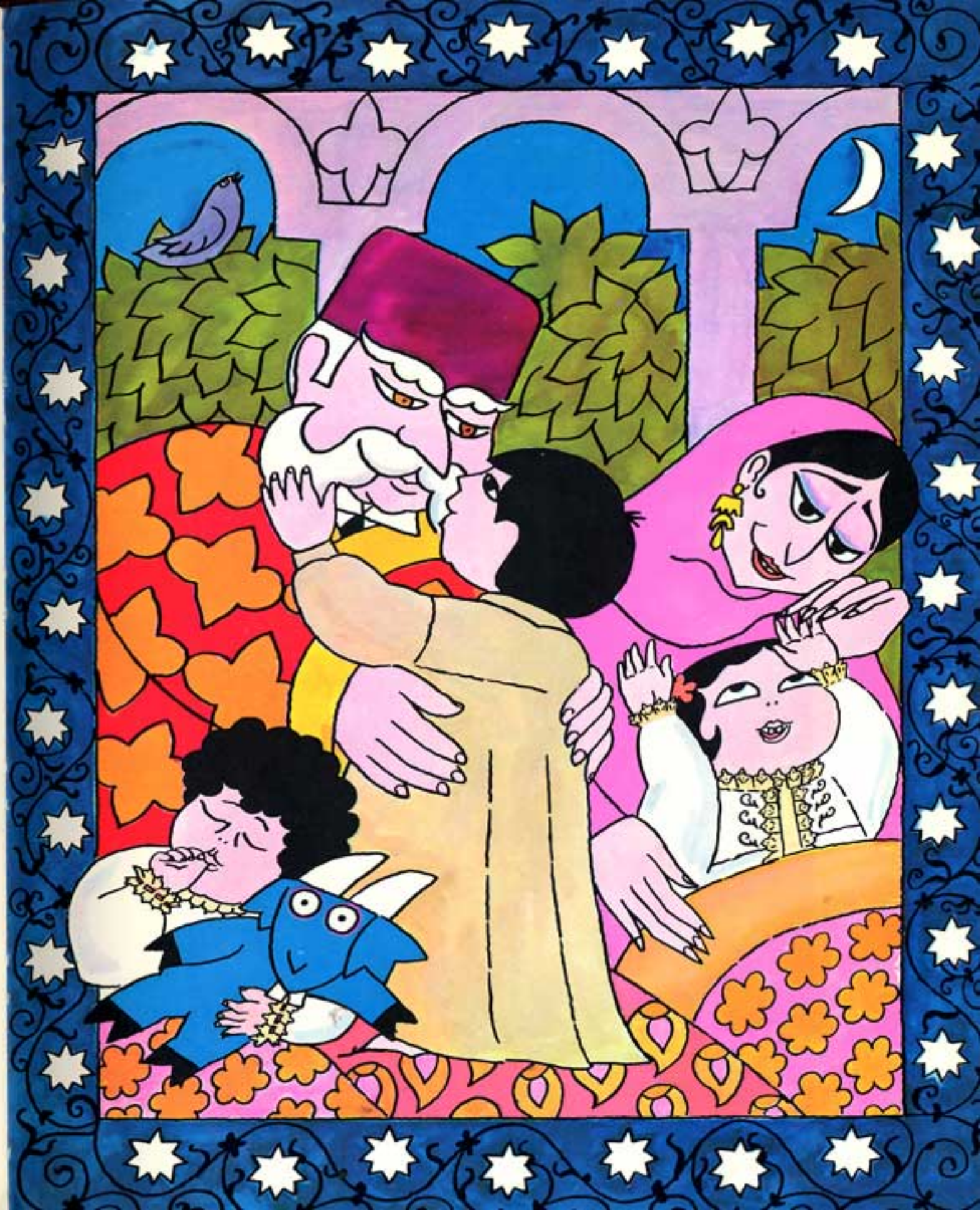
"Papa Your Highness, will the gardener get another goat?"

"I think not, sweet girl. Soon the young bus driver will be like a true son to him. Our gardener no longer needs a goat to keep him company."

"Papa Your Highness, there's no school tomorrow, you know, and all of us shall *die* if we can't go somewhere in the new school bus!"

"I'm glad you warned me, but I'm far ahead of you. I've planned an all-day picnic for tomorrow and you shall indeed go by school bus!"

"Hurray-y-y!"



"Good night, then. My own eyes are falling shut," said the Prince.

"Good night."

"Good night."

"Good night."

TAMAM SHOD





"I graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, planning a career in fine arts. Instead, I married into an extraordinary Persian family and found myself in the transitional world of modern Iran, a fascinating milieu of astonishing contrasts, where the old and new are always side by side. I never met Prince Farman-Farma, the head of this vigorous family, but I know him well through his laughter, counsels, and commands that echo daily in the lives of his children. His wise and friendly spirit paces the halls and gardens of their households. And as they live their busy, westernized lives, he walks beside them in his courtly dress of a bygone day. It is this conscious link between past and present which so distinguishes Iranian life, as I saw it, that caused me to write this small, happy tale."

Jo F. Farmayan



"I've loved flowers since my earliest summers spent crawling among the grape leaves and marigolds in my Uncle Joe's garden. There was another garden in my childhood, it grew in the calico and cretonne fabrics at my father's "New England Dress Goods Store" on Second Avenue in New York City. From the time I was four I knew I was going to draw. But would I ever get a chance to use all those patterns of flowers? Then I saw my first Persian Miniature painting, and a whole world of exquisite art became mine. I always feel twice blessed when a book comes along that lets me use some of the flower images that are forever imprinted on my eyes."

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